

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel without prejudice claims 1-34, and add new claims 44-47, as indicated in the list of pending claims below.

PENDING CLAIMS

1-34. (Canceled)

35. (Previously Presented): A tissue acquisition device useful in retrieving tissue samples from a patient, comprising:

an inner cannula having a proximal end, a distal end, a longitudinal axis extending between said proximal and distal ends, a tubular sidewall, a cut out in the sidewall and a main lumen extending within at least a portion of the inner cannula;

an outer cannula having a proximal end, a distal end, a longitudinal axis extending between said proximal and distal ends, a tubular sidewall, a cutout in the tubular sidewall of the outer cannula and a main lumen extending within at least a portion of the outer cannula;

a passageway extending longitudinally along said device from said proximal end toward said distal end;

an electrically conducting cutting wire slidably and rotatably disposed in said passageway, having a proximal end and a distal end and having a cutting loop at a said distal end which extends out of said passageway and which is configured to rotate out of the inner cannula to a position exterior to the outer cannula, to move longitudinally in a direction generally parallel to the longitudinal axis exterior to the outer cannula and to rotate from a position exterior to the outer cannula into the inner cannula.

36. (Previously Presented): The tissue acquisition device of claim 35, wherein said electrically conducting cutting wire is configured to make electrical contact with a source of radio-frequency electrical energy.

37. (Previously Presented): The tissue acquisition device of claim 35, wherein said cutting loop is a RF energy cutting loop.

38. (Previously Presented): The tissue acquisition device of claim 35, wherein said cutting loop comprises a material selected from the group consisting of stainless steel, tungsten, platinum, and nickel-titanium alloy.

39. (Previously Presented): The tissue acquisition device of claim 35, further comprising an electrically conducting distal cutting wire disposed near the distal end of said device.

40. (Previously Presented): The tissue acquisition device of claim 39, wherein said electrically conducting distal cutting wire is configured to make electrical contact with a source of radio-frequency electrical energy.

41. (Previously Presented): The tissue acquisition device of claim 40, wherein said electrically conducting distal cutting wire comprises a material selected from the group consisting of stainless steel, tungsten, platinum, and nickel-titanium alloy.

42. (Previously Presented): The tissue acquisition device of claim 35, further comprising an end plug disposed on the distal end of said device.

43. (Previously Presented): The tissue acquisition device of claim 42, further comprising an electrically conducting distal cutting wire disposed distal to said end plug.

44. (New): A tissue acquisition device useful in retrieving tissue samples from a patient, comprising:

an elongated probe member having a proximal end, a distal end, a longitudinal axis extending between said proximal and distal ends, a tubular sidewall, a cut out in the sidewall and an inner lumen extending within at least a portion of the elongated probe member and in fluid communication with the cut out in the side wall;

an electrically conducting cutting wire which is slidably and rotatably disposed in said passageway, which has a distal end and a cutting loop at the distal end which is configured to rotate out of the cut out in the tubular sidewall to a position exterior to the elongated probe member, to move longitudinally in a direction generally parallel to the longitudinal axis exterior to the elongated probe member and to rotate from a position exterior to the outer cannula into the elongated probe member through the cut out in the tubular side wall.

45. (New): The tissue acquisition device of claim 44, wherein said electrically conducting cutting wire is configured to be electrically connected to a source of radio-frequency electrical energy.

46. (New): The tissue acquisition device of claim 44, wherein the cutting loop is formed at least in part of a material selected from the group consisting of stainless steel, tungsten, platinum, and nickel-titanium alloy.

47. (New) The tissue acquisition device of claim 44, wherein an electrically conducting distal cutting wire is disposed near the distal end of said device distal to the cut out in the tubular side wall.